

The Woman's Page of The Times-Dispatch

Amethyst Their Birthstone; Primrose Their Natal Flower

A woman born between the dates of January 19 and February 19 and under the sign of Aquarius, the Water Bearer, is entitled to an amethyst as a birthstone and should wear a primrose as a natal flower, it being a symbol of sincerity and freedom from care and strife.

The prominent characteristics of Aquarius women may be found in their good memory, their sensitiveness, good taste and their power of absorbing and retaining knowledge and understanding human nature.

Such women have a wonderful amount of magnetic power over those with whom they come in contact. While they are free from vulgar aggressiveness, they are generally inspired with a determination and earnestness that eventually leads to success. As a class they are divided into two types, one of whom, by its confidence and self-reliance, is a brilliant example to humanity; the other, deficient in self-control and esteem, is incapacitated for leadership and passes unnoticed in life's throng.

The stimulus of touch and sight offered by city social intercourse seems necessary to bring out what is best and most effective in Aquarius women, who are generally to be found among the patronesses of an opera or other artistic entertainments, in the ranks of feminine workers for the public good, or at the most round of the profession of teaching, where they appear to be able to call out what counts most in others.

They often work for world's sake, and make themselves prominent in occupations to which they do not naturally or preferably incline. By undertaking or promising too much, they frequently find themselves where they are unable to perform all to which they have pledged themselves, or to redeem their pledges in a careful and creditable manner.

An over-zeal to please, over-sensitiveness, over-exertion or inharmonious home conditions are weaknesses which Aquarius women have to fight and conquer in themselves. On the other hand, they are staunchly loyal to their friends, overlooking faults and bringing to the support of their friendships a vast amount of enthusiasm, faith and hope. In their tastes, these women are generally simple, yet they sometimes display their love of harmonious colors in tasteful apparel which gives them a reputation for elegance and good style.

When the spiritual powers of Aquarius women are highly developed, these women are most beneficial agents from a human point of view, divining by intuition the genuine needs of others and seldom being imposed upon, even by the most plausible pretender. Their reassuring power to those weaker than themselves is born not of a reasoning faculty, but may be traced to the very source of being, the divine afflatus, which is breathed into womanhood at its entrance into the world.

The lucky day of the seven for Aquarius women is Saturday. During the year, August 27, is their most fortunate date. April is their month, and the week beginning April 11, may be counted on to give them a blessing.

THE MIDWINTER HINT OF SUMMER TO COME

November and December of 1910 were by comparison with the same months in preceding years uncommonly cold and bleak.

To make amends, January of 1911 went well into its list of days with a mildness and serenity that one was almost afraid to enjoy fully because, this being the midwinter season, there must inevitably be bad days a-plenty ahead before spring could really arrive.

This midwinter lull, this interval of soft air and blue skies, when the ground began to grow green, with the quick upspringing of grass sprigs in sheltered places, was so swiftly gone that it was wise just to take it as it came and to be thankful for it. After all, the deluge? But what mattered that, so long as the brightness and balminess endured even for some days and offered a foretaste of springtime and summer?

The way in which humanity accepts an unusual weather blessing is always curious. There is the farmer class which it invariably sets to grumbling. "Ah," said one, considered a special authority as to seasons and their outcome, "this deceitful spell which is giving people pneumonia and bronchitis is going to make the fruit trees bud and start all kinds of vegetation. Then a heavy freeze will come along, and where will the promise for peaches and apples go?"

"But why don't you treat your trees to a cold spray?" inquired a more modern and progressive advocate of new ideas. The farmer paused and glanced scornfully in the direction of this inquiry. "Because," he asserted impressively, "I don't undertake to interfere with Nature. I take it, she understands her work well enough to get along without interference from me! And the foolishness of the question of fruit trees and farmers' loss."

"I think it is just too bad," exclaimed a pretty young woman, sitting beside an open window in a Richmond home last week. "I have just the loveliest set of silver fox furs you ever saw, given me for New Year. Now here it is the middle of the month, and I have scarcely had them on. Furs! Why one feels more like hunting for violets and going out to the crocus and hyacinth beds, than wrapping up in this balmy atmosphere." And her expression of disappointment was pathetic.

The change from balminess to snow and cold has probably relieved the fears of the farmer and brought the silver fox furs into use. But it has loosened the compliments of another set of admirers, the rather cranks who don't like to walk on elegant streets, and consider their native climate as too capricious and whimsical to be endured or enjoyed with equanimity or appreciation.

The Man Across the Kirk

A lady, when one day approached by her Scotch maid with the information that she was about to leave. "What is the cause of this sudden decision, Mary?"

"I think I'll be a-marryin'."

"Indeed, and whom, may I ask?"

"The man that sits across in the kirk."

"But what is his name?"

"I dinna kin."

"What! You're surely not engaged to a man whose name you do not know?"

"Not engaged, my lady, but he's been lookin' at me an' I think he'll soon be speakin'."



Supreme Realization of Lifelong Dream

Two women of Bakersville had long wanted to travel, writes Anne S. Moore, in the Housekeeper. Their own backyards, where Monday's washing gave way to Tuesday's skeleton-like lines, and where, by Wednesday, there was time enough to gossip over neighboring fences; their front doors that opened onto little grass plots and the houses of lifelong friends across the way; the long street that wound up over a hill, where stood the school-house—the same they had attended in childhood, and where now their nieces and nephews trod the old, worn way, even the people, the church, the minister, the clubs—all wearied them; they wanted a change.

At last, after much planning and saving and doing without, the two women accumulated sufficient funds to realize their lifelong dream.

Gay of heart, amid fluttering handkerchiefs, they bade good-bye to the old home town, their train pulled out and they were away.

They set about seeing all they had dreamed for a lifetime of seeing: They strolled around ruined castles, lingered in vast cathedrals and felt a thrill of Time's recurring season, loitered among the tombs of Westminster, smelt the sweet freshness of Scotch heather, hobbled with the quaint Irish folk of the Emerald Isle, listened to Italian opera, romped at will among old masters of paint and canvas, sailed the blue Mediterranean, floated down the sluggish Nile, rode camels in the desert, bought lace and rare perfumes of aloof-eyed Arabs and Turks.

The Woman and Wife Forced to Seek Compensation

Women as a general thing, are optimists and philosophers. The greater number live for the day and by the day, without pausing to take an inventory of the stock in trade they have on hand.

Married women have quarrels and reconciliations with their husbands and largely live, breathe and have their being through the light of their husband's eyes, not being able to plan for the future without husbandly guidance.

Sometimes a woman is brought up short, forced to consider her assets and see what she can do to make her life worth living. Perhaps she has a husband who takes no account of her, her wishes or her happiness, in his scheme of life. He seems simple home pleasures and loathes society, and has no desire for his wife's company in or out of doors. Such a husband never notices his wife's looks, or sees a pretty gown if she is the wearer of it. If she achieves a social triumph, he claims no part or share in it.

The one thing that transforms this indifferent man into an active agent is a bill to be paid. He does not believe that his wife is entitled to a bill, and he scolds her roundly whenever she brings one to him.

If the woman and the wife so situated has a thinking mind, she sooner or later asks herself the question: If she is one of the phases which a woman is called in to take what is unwillingly doled out as her share of conjugal happiness. Generally she has

to accommodate the needs and desires of her nature to her dolo, and then seek for compensation. Perhaps she has children to love and work for, and perhaps she can interest herself in keeping her home fresh and bright, and in seeing her friends around her table, or in the intimacy of the twilight fire glow.

If, however, a careless, neglectful husband leaves to her own resources a wife of undoubted charm and beauty, to one can imagine from what dangerous or insidious source a coveted word of tenderness or approval may come, in an hour of weakness when temptation is hardest to resist. Such victims to constant slights from their husbands should have, for their defense the rare and uncommon gifts of insight, inspiration, heavenly purity and divine steadfastness.

Fortunately for the salvation of humanity is the humbler truth that women, having a greater moral sense, are more able to deal with and to overcome temptation than men. Then, aside from the attitude of society which compels women to be good, there is within them, a strong inclination toward purity and cleanliness, mental and physical, rendering the atmosphere through which their vision pierces clear enough for them to see the end from the beginning.

Not every woman who has an indifferent husband is beset by the danger which comes through the admiration and adulation of other men. But it is one of the phases which a woman who is striving to round out her character and fill the vacant niche in her

heart where her husband's house ought to be, may be confronted with. The transcendental passion of youth is a flame that burns itself out. But in its place the steady fire of affection, better worth tending than any other one thing in the world, can be enkindled. And even the most careless husband, if he discovers that his wife is starting out to live a separate life with separate interests from his own, should make it his business to institute a different and a better rule of existence for her and for himself.

THE PROCESS OF UPSTIRRING AND BOILING OVER

Some women are like coffee when it is frothing over the fire. If they are stirred up, they will boil over.

They are easy women to entertain, if the entertainer knows her business. She simply has to give her conversational spoon a brisk turn, and the result is instantaneous.

The boiling over is accompanied with more or less of a splutter. But it is absolutely spontaneous, and it must be a great relief. It brings away what is known in coffee as "the scum," and evidently rids the mind of an accumulated stock that escapes in the overflow.

This the Season for Making Dainty Underwear

Women who have leisure may, if they choose, make all their dainty undergarments by hand; but this takes a great deal of time and most of us would rather spend the valuable moments in reading or some other rarely-to-be enjoyed occupation. Knowing where to put the handwork is what counts in making underwear. Long seams which must be reversed in French fashion and beamed up again may be run on the sewing machine and the pretty trickery of hand-stitchery spent on the joining of motifs of lace and embroidery, of running infinitesimal pin tucks and of adding, here and there, bits of hand-embroidered dot or flower patterns which will infinitely increase the beauty of the work.

All lingerie garments now are planned to give the least possible bulk around the waist and hips. This year petticoats also are very narrow at the foot, even the lace and embroidery affairs measuring scarcely more than two yards around. The only exception is the dancing petticoat, which is at least four yards at the foot and is made of softest mull, with a hand-embroidered flounce dropped over two or more flounces of lace. The hand-embroidered and dotted petticoat flounces are so dainty and refined in character and so much more beautiful than any machine-embroidered trimming.

Women Evidently Do Not Consider Wisdom Becoming

"If wisdom were becoming to a woman," writes the flippant cynic, she would know everything."

Formerly the cynic's logic was supported by the woman's policy. She was wont to desire the becoming, but only the becoming. If a fashion was introduced that did not set off her face or figure to advantage, that fashion was a failure.

What a pity, then, that wisdom proved unbecoming. For if a woman could know everything, she would certainly be wise enough to realize how ridiculous she looks in a hobble-skirt. She would take off the huge, ugly headgear that covers her pretty hair and eschew the puffs, curls and plaits that disguise the natural and graceful outlines of her shapely head.

The men-milliners, who are the creators of style and the arbiters of what is worn, must be mightily amused at the paradoxes presented in this year of grace, 1911, when women on the one hand are proclaiming their independence, demanding citizenship and asserting their individual rights and prerogatives, and, on the other, are still meekly submitting to the dictation of the male sex, even as to the clothes they wear. This, too, when the present out of the clothes must have been prompted by an impish perversity on the part of leading sartorial artists who probably had a wager as to ugliness in that out and in the hang of what they would impose upon that half of humanity that has always adopted the ideas of great masculine names among the arbiters of fashion.

The history of the development of women has been marked by many changes, but whatever else has changed, their slavish subjection to the fashion cult has remained as immovable as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

More and more, say observers of social and political conditions, the world as to its womanhood is tending toward democracy. Certainly toward democracy in dress. In nowhere is the breaking down of class distinctions more plainly indicated than in the fact that now all women may be and are extravagantly gowned without regard to position or profession. The working woman or girl can be as thoroughly "hobbed," as the woman of leisure and wealth, can have her hair as elaborately coiffed and her hat as fully loaded down with willow plumes. So that all, not a few women only, are worshippers at the shrine sacred to the gods of the toilet.

And no woman is free or can be free who worships unchangeably at such a shrine. Women, if they are advanced and intelligent, should be too much so, to render themselves ridiculous by adopting the vagaries of some man modiste, who is either animated by a desire to flourish his authority to the point of obscuring their beauty by enshrouding ugliness, or of exploiting feminine weakness and inconsistency to the fullest extent.

DICKENS TESTIMONIAL STAMPS AND HIS LAST LETTER

The first proofs of the Charles Dickens centenary testimonial stamps have been presented to President Taft and King George of England. The Dickens centenary will be celebrated February 7, 1912, and the testimonial stamps appear in the form of an artistic book plate, which Dickens admirers may use in their editions of the novelist's works or in separate volumes.

The first American issue of the stamps shows an artistic design, with the name of the author in miniature, an inscription, "A Tribute to Genius," and the dates, 1812-1912, above the signature. Underneath, a facsimile of Dickens's signature. Andrew Carnegie, Pierpont Morgan and Cornelius Bliss have drawn largely upon this issue for library purposes. The stamps are published in sheets of twelve and enclosed in a Dickens centenary envelope, and they may be procured by those desiring them from booksellers generally.

The February Strand Magazine contains a facsimile of the last letter written by Charles Dickens, a few hours before his death, on June 9, 1870. This facsimile was taken direct from the letter in the British Museum, the last paragraph of which reads: "But I hope I may be ready at 3 o'clock. If I can't be, why, then, I shan't be. Ever affectionately, C. D."

"Every word of this paragraph," says Holt Schoelling, who took the facsimile mentioned here, "drops below the level from which it starts; each line of writing descends across the page. The simple C. D. is very shaky, and the whole letter is broken and shaky. Charles Dickens was not ready" at 3 o'clock. He died at ten minutes past 6 P. M.

The Strand's interesting article in Charles Dickens is illustrated with fifty-five autographs, written at various times of his life.

"Among them is a very famous signature, the original of which is on a deed of license, parchment, entitled 'Deed of License, Assignment, Accord and Respecting a Work called the Pickwick Papers.' It is probable," says Mr. Schoelling, "that the fact of the seal being here placed between Charles and Dickens prevented the flourish which almost invariably accompanied his signature on business documents. The marked enlargement of this signature takes the place of the flourish and shows an unconscious emphasis of the ego. It would be almost unreasonable for us to expect that so impressionable a man, who was also feeling his power and fame, could abstain from showing outward signs of his own consciousness of abnormal success."

"Yet in the private letters of Dickens the simple 'C. D.' is very frequent. It may be said that at this point of difference is alike interesting to the student of gesture and to the student of Dickens's character. He was certainly a very able man of business, and the wording of his 'business' letters by his 'business' signature, as the simple 'C. D.' was fully aware of his own powers, and that, quite fairly, he did not omit to impress the fact upon other people when he thought fit. Both the wording and the signature of many of his private letters are simple and unostentatious to a high degree. This curious fact ought to be remembered when people talk about Dickens's conceit and love of show. My explanation is, I think, both logical and true."

—L'ART DE LA MODE.